



February 2, 2023

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chairman
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Inc. has voted to offer **favorable** support for Senate Bill 51 – Criminal Procedure - Reasonable Suspicion and Probable Cause - Cannabis. **This bill is a 2023 legislative priority of the Black Caucus.**

This legislation seeks to prohibit the use of certain types of cannabis-related evidence as the sole basis of establishing reasonable suspicion or probable cause of criminal activity. Additionally, this bill will bar the admissibility of evidence obtained in violation of its provisions in legal proceedings.

Throughout the nation, Black people are disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and more likely to be arrested. Considering this, there is a need for reformative policy that will prevent further criminalization, especially related to cannabis-related searches in Maryland. In light of the legalization of cannabis use in Maryland, it is critical that measures are put in place to prevent and establish protections against odor-based searches. This bill will establish a policy that prevents officers from stopping motorists and searching their vehicles without evidence of intoxication or any other just cause, protecting Marylanders from illegal searches and abating unjust criminalization. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports Senate Bill 51 and would appreciate your favorable support of this legislation.

Jheanelle Wilkins

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

Chair, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland